

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CCO-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 EUR-10 PM-03 L-02 PRS-01 CIAE-00

INR-09 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 DPW-01 T-01 IO-03 RSR-01

/070 W

----- 082698

O 171205 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8798

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

USDEL FRANCE

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LIMDIS

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: MARR VS

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY SOUNDING ON SHARP VISIT

1. EXTAFF MIN SHARP DEPARTED SAIAGON 1500 MAR 17, AFTER 48 HOUR STAY. FOLLOWING PRELIMINARY REPORT ON VISIT IS BASED ON DISCUSSIONS WITH CANDEL (EXSTAFF) SOURCE AND REFLECTS HIS IMPRESSIONS OF PRESENTATIONS- CANDIAN AND OTHERWISE- TO SHARP. SOURCE DID NOT INDICATED SHARP'S REACTIONS. EMBASSY WILL PURSUE MORE THOROUGH SOUNDINGS WITH CANDEL SOURCES TOMORROW.

2. PRESENTATIONS FROM CANADIAN SIDE TO SHARP APPARENTLY TENDED TO BE GLOOMY WITH RESPECT TO DIRECTION OF ICCS TO DATE, OUTLOOK FOR REDUCTION IN LEVEL OF FIGHTING, AND PROSPECTS FOR TWO PARTY POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. CANDEL SOURCE INDICATED PRESIDENT THIEU, FOREIGN MINISTER LAM, AND OTHER NON- CANADIANS WITH WHOM SHARP TALKED WERE UNANIMOUS IN THEIR EXPRESSIONS OF HOPE THAT GOC WOULD CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN ICCS. HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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FEW OF THESE CONTACTS WERE ABLE TO PRESENT WHAT CANADIANS COULD CONSIDER AS VALID CASE (FROM CANADIAN POINT OF VIEW) AS TO WHY CANADIANS SHOULD STAY IN THE COMMISSION. CANDELS WHO BRIEFED MR. SHARP INDICATED ONLY CLEARLY SATISFACTORY IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK RELATED TO ICCS WAS TROOP WITHDRAWL AND EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS- PARTICULARLY US POW'S

3. ON OTHER HAND, MOST DISTRESSING TO CANADIANS PROVIDING BRIEFINGS WAS RAPID EMERGENCE OF FIXED POSTIONS WITHIN ICCS, ACCOMPLISHING IN SIX WEEKS A SITUATION WITHIN THE ICCS WHICH IT HAD TAKEN TWO OR THREE YEARS TO ACCOMPLISH IN THE ICC. (INT HIS REGARD, NDP MP ROLAND, IN A PRIVATE SESSION WITH THE POLISH AND HUNGARIAN AMBASSADORS, NOTED POLES WERE EXTREMELY HARDLINE WHILE HUNGARIAN AMBASSADOR APPEARED MUCH MORE FLEXIBLE ON ICCS ISSUES.) CANADIAN BRIEFERS EXPRESSED DISMAY THAT COMMUNIST REPS ON ICCS UNABLE TO ADDRESS THEMSELVES MORE OBJECTIVELY IN THEIR WORK.

4. SHARP'S SESSIONS WITH THIEU AND LAM WERE APPARENTLY VERY UNIMPRESSIVE. THIEU WAS REPORTEDLY UNABLE TO OFFER A VERY CONVINCING STATEMENT THAT A POLITICAL SOLUTION WOULD EMERGE. LAM, WHO SEVERAL DAYS EARLIER HAD APPARENTLY PUT ON A GOOD SHOW FOR CANADIAN AMBASSADOR GAUVIN, WAS INEXPLICABLY WEAK IN HIS TALKS WITH SHARP.

5. CANDEL SOURCE STATED SHARP'S VISIT TO CAN THO MORNING OF MARCH 17 HAD GONE WELL AND BRIEFINGS PROVIDED BY REGION VII PERSONNEL HAD BEEN EFFECTIVE. HE GAVE NO INDICATION, HOWEVER, THAT THESE BRIEFINGS DIFFERED IN ANY SIGNIFICANT RESPECT FROM THOSE WHICH SHARP RECEIVED IN SAIGON.

6. CANDEL SOURCE NOTED THAT INFORMATION SHARP HAD GATHERED ON THIS INSPECTION WOULD BE IMPORTANT BUT BY NO MEANS ONLY FACTOR IN ULTIMATE GOC DECISION RE FUTURE PARTICIPATION IN ICCS. HE WAS OF THE JUDGMENT, HOWEVER, THAT GOC WOULD MAKE CLEAR CUT DECISION OF EITHER TERMINATING ITS PARTICIPATION OR INDICATING IT WOULD CONTINUE ITS PARTICIPATION SUBJECT ONLY TO PROVISION OF THE AGREEMENT RE 90 DAY NOTIFICATION OF WITHDRAWL. HE DID NOT BELIEVE A TEMPORIZING DECISION OF ONE OR TWO MONTHS WOULD BE MADE.

7. COMMENT: THRUST OF SOURCE'S COMMENTS WERE NOT VERY ENCOURAGING

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WITH RESPECT TO PROBABLE IMPRESSION MADE ON SHARP.
WE CONSIDER THIS " DEBRIEFING" AS TENTATIVE, HOWEVER, SUBJECT TO
FURTHER CHECKING WITH CANDEL SOURCES.
BUNKER

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